

Alternatives

Development of Alternatives for Land Use Plan Amendments

Three alternative land use plan amendments (Alternatives 2, 3, and 4) are described and analyzed in this EA. Each of these “action” alternatives proposes (a) changes to existing management for land tenure adjustment and (b) new Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) designations. These actions would amend the Magic MFP, Bennett Hills/Timmerman Hills MFP, Sun Valley MFP, and Monument RMP (land use plans directing management of public lands administered by the Shoshone Field Office - see Map 1). Proposed designation of the King Hill Creek ACEC/RNA and Bennett Hills ACEC would also amend the Jarbidge RMP, which directs management of public lands administered by the Four Rivers Field Office, Lower Snake River District, BLM. The option of “no action” - continuing existing management (Alternative 1) - is also described and analyzed.

Alternatives Considered, but not Analyzed in Detail

Land Tenure:

Identification of Specific Adjustment Parcels Rather than a “Zones” Management Approach: Prior to recent changes in the BLM - Idaho’s management direction for future land tenure adjustment planning efforts, specific parcels would have to be identified for potential disposal at the time a land use plan was written. Any lands not identified for potential disposal would require a plan amendment to be considered. However, when the decision was made to complete these plan amendments (in early 1999), the Bureau had begun to allow a “zone” concept for identifying management (retention) and adjustment areas. A zone concept for identifying these areas provides flexibility to the BLM and a long-term capability to meet public needs. In contrast, the specific adjustment parcels currently identified in the land use plans (see Appendix 6, pp. 177-187) would not satisfy the needs of the Shoshone Field Office’s constituents over the long term, and disposal of some of the identified parcels would create even more management inefficiencies than at present. In addition, a “specific parcel” approach cannot possibly foresee all the land tenure adjustment proposals that might be considered in the future; this approach would very likely result in the need for future time-consuming and costly plan amendments in order to consider land tenure adjustment proposals outside the identified parcels. A more general approach like the zone concept presented in these amendments provides consistent criteria for evaluating land tenure adjustment proposals, and should reduce or eliminate the need for future plan amendments related to land tenure adjustment.

No Disposal of Public Lands: The BLM’s current planning guidance requires the BLM to identify potential disposal areas during the land use planning process. Disposal of some public lands in the planning area (through sale, exchange, or R&PP patent) would benefit the American public. A “no disposal” alternative would preclude the BLM from considering land tenure adjustment proposals that would improve public lands resources and management efficiency or otherwise benefit the public.

Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs):

ACECs Nominated, but Not Proposed for Designation: Three ACECs were nominated, but not included in the land use plan amendments alternatives, because they did not meet the required relevance and importance criteria for designation as an ACEC. A detailed evaluation of these nominated ACECs is presented in Appendix 3.

Nominated ACEC	Acreage	Nominated Value(s)*	Reason(s) Not Considered Further
Big Wood/Warm Springs	236 acres	Scenic	The nominated area meets the required criteria for relevance, but does not meet the importance criteria.
Fir Grove	45 acres	Isolated stand of Douglas-fir	The nominated area does not meet the required criteria for relevance and importance.
King's Crown	10 acres	Unique and rare plant species	The nominated area meets the required criteria for relevance, but does not meet the importance criteria.

*Values for ACEC nomination identified by the nominator.

Land Tenure Adjustment - Alternatives Formulation

Land tenure adjustments of public lands managed by the Shoshone Field Office are presently limited to those parcels specifically identified in the Field Office's four land use plans (see Map 2 and Appendix 6). Consideration of other lands requires a land use plan amendment. The Shoshone Field Office currently has more than 100 land exchange and sales proposals on file that do not meet the disposal decisions in the land use plans and can only be considered for disposal after they are identified in a plan amendment. The three alternative plan amendments described in this Environmental Assessment establish new direction for land tenure adjustment in the Field Office area; this new direction makes public lands available for disposal in response to the public's changing priorities, improves the BLM's ability to manage the existing land base and present resource values, and helps meet other objectives of the existing land use plans.

The action alternatives identify land tenure adjustment availability and priorities for large land areas called "zones" (areas that contain common issues or planned actions) instead of identifying specific parcels by legal description. The action alternatives also establish new land tenure adjustment review criteria. The result is a flexible, dynamic mechanism whereby the BLM and a proponent can evaluate the merits of a proposal by considering factors that include (a) the zone's emphasis on retention or land tenure adjustment (see zone descriptions on pages 26-31 below) and (b) specific criteria for land ownership adjustment (described in Appendix 1, pages 123-124). Once the Shoshone Field Office determines that a land tenure adjustment proposal is consistent with requirements of the Federal Land Policy Management Act (FLPMA), the project area's zone definition, and the amendments' criteria for land ownership adjustment, the BLM will consider the likelihood that the proposal will have public support. If the proposal appears to have public support, the BLM will assess current and anticipated workloads, priorities, staff, and funding, and set a priority for the proposal to be evaluated through appropriate NEPA documentation. Each individual action would be required to comply with direction in FLPMA, be within the amendments' guidelines for land tenure adjustment, meet the project area's zone definition and the

Criteria for Land Ownership Adjustment (*Appendix I*), and stand on its own merit through public input and review. All disposals, whether by sale, exchange, or other authority, are subject to a decision by the authorized officer which would be based on detailed NEPA analysis and documentation as prescribed by law or regulation.

The following example illustrates how a proposal would be considered according to the amendments' land tenure adjustment framework:

Step 1: Land Tenure Adjustment Proposal Submitted

Does the proposal meet the intent of FLPMA? Is there a Federal interest (i.e., public benefit) to implementing the proposal? If the proposal is a land exchange, are the monetary values of the offered and selected lands relatively similar?

YES - Continue to step 2.

NO - No further consideration of the action as presently proposed.

Step 2: Proposal Screened by Zone Definition

Does the proposal fit within the guidelines of the affected area's zone definition for the selected amendment?

YES - Continue to step 3.

NO - No further consideration of the action as presently proposed.

Step 3: Proposal Screened by Land Ownership Adjustment Criteria

Is the proposed action a high priority based on the land ownership adjustment criteria?

YES - Continue to step 4.

NO - No further consideration of the action as presently proposed.

Step 4: Likelihood of Proposal Receiving Public Support

Is it likely the proposal will receive public support during the NEPA process?

YES - Continue to step 5.

NO - No further consideration of the action as presently proposed.

Step 5: Scheduling the Proposal for Appropriate Public Involvement and NEPA

Given established and future priorities, current and anticipated public and private funding and staffing, and the extent to which the proposal will benefit the American public, what should be the priority for completing the NEPA work on this proposal?

Management Common to all Three Action Alternatives

Several land tenure management actions would be implemented under all three action alternatives: lands status and management zones; criteria for land ownership adjustment; procedures for considering existing and new applications for public lands under the Desert Land Entry Act and Carey Act; criteria for transferring privately-held water right places of water use (POUs); and increased opportunity to improve public lands values and manageability by acquiring other lands through exchange, sale, or other means.

Lands Status and Management Zones

Initially, four lands status and management zones were developed and presented to the public (Zones 1-4). Based on public comments received during scoping, a fifth zone (Zone 5) was added. These zones are shown on Map 3 and defined below. The zone boundaries are the same for Alternatives 2 and 3. However, no Zone 5 lands are defined under Alternative 4; those lands shown as Zone 5 under Alternatives 2 and 3 would be managed as Zone 3 under Alternative 4. [**Note:** No lands status and management zones are defined under the existing management situation. If Alternative 1 is selected, only those land tenure adjustment proposals that meet current disposal criteria and are identified for disposal in the existing land use plans would be considered (see Map 2 and Appendix 6).]

The approximate acreage of each zone is shown in Table 2 below. All acres and percentages cited in the following zone definitions are based upon the information in this table.

Table 2: Land Status Within Each Lands Management Zone

Note: Acres and percentages are approximate.

Zone	Private (acres)	State (acres)	BLM (acres)	Total	
				acres	%
1	7,000	7,000	180,000	194,000	7
2	92,000	44,000	956,000	1,092,000	39
3	359,000	48,000	127,000	534,000	19
4	573,000	25,000	56,000	654,000	24
5*	156,000	20,000	121,000	297,000	11
Total	1,187,000	144,000	1,440,000	2,771,000	100

*Under Alternative 4, these Zone 5 acres would be included in Zone 3.

Retention Areas (Zone 1 and Zone 2):

Retention areas are those regions of public lands that would be retained in public ownership. Zone 1 and Zone 2 lands would be considered retention areas under all three action alternatives (Alternatives 2, 3, and 4).

Zone 1 lands are public lands with special designations because of significant resource values; all Zone 1 lands shall be retained in public ownership. Examples of Zone 1 lands include Wilderness Areas, Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs), National Monuments, National Trails, eligible Wild and Scenic Rivers (W&SR), Natural Conservation Areas (NCAs), and ACECs. Zone 1 lands also include public lands acquired through means, such as the Land and Water Conservation Fund, that require such lands to remain in Federal ownership. In the future, as lands receive a special designation, they will automatically be added to this zone. At present, Zone 1 contains about 180,000 acres of public lands, or 12.5% of public lands managed by the Shoshone Field Office. The zone has few private or State inholdings (14,000 acres or 7% of lands in the zone). The BLM's acquisition priority for Zone 1 under all action alternatives is to seek to acquire all private and State land in-holdings.

Zone 2 lands are public lands that have a fairly well-consolidated ownership pattern and contain potentially high values for resources and land uses such as minerals, recreation, range, riparian, cultural resources, and wildlife habitat. Zone 2 is the largest management zone proposed, and includes 956,000 acres of public lands, or 66% of the public lands managed by the Shoshone Field Office. Zone 2 has a well consolidated ownership pattern, with only 12% of the zone (136,000 acres) in private or State ownership. The BLM's priorities for Zone 2 lands are to:

- first, retain the existing large blocks of high value public lands within the zone;
- second, consolidate public lands ownership within high priority watersheds by seeking to acquire private and State inholdings in those watersheds; and
- third, acquire additional high resource value lands within lower priority watersheds, as long as those acquired lands also improve efficiencies in public lands management.

Public lands within ½ -mile of either side of the Zone 2 boundary will be considered potentially suitable for disposal primarily by exchange (and secondarily by sale or R&PP patent), *unless* that ½ mile extends into a Zone 1 (retention) area. Each individual disposal action would be required to comply with the guidelines in FLPMA, meet the Criteria for Land Ownership Adjustment (see Appendix 1), stand on its own merit through public input and review, and be in compliance with NEPA. Public access will be considered in all land tenure actions.

Adjustment Areas (Zone 3, Zone 4, and Zone 5):

Public lands within the three zones labeled as “adjustment areas” are generally smaller parcels that are (a) fragmented because they are interspersed with private and/or State lands or (b) isolated from the larger blocks of public lands within the planning area. These geographic and ownership factors make management of the public lands in Zones 3, 4, and 5 difficult. Most of these lands are therefore identified for disposal through exchange, in order to consolidate land ownership within the three zones. The net result is expected to be larger blocks of public, private, and State lands than at present, with increased public and administrative access to public lands. Although Zones 3, 4, and 5 are considered “adjustment areas” (because most land ownership adjustment in the planning area would occur there), public lands with high resource values would generally be retained in Federal ownership.

Zone 3 lands are small to medium-sized blocks of public lands which are interspersed with State and private lands. Zone 3 lands in the northwest portion of the planning area are also isolated from other public lands managed by the Shoshone Field Office. (**Note:** Under Alternative 4, the lands labeled as “Zone 5” on Map 3 would also be managed according to the Zone 3 definition, since Zone 5 would not exist under Alternative 4.) Zone 3 is a relatively small component of the Field Office area, containing only 127,000 acres or 9% of public lands managed by the Shoshone Field Office (248,000 acres or 17% of the Field Office area under Alternative 4). However, the zone has extensive acres in private ownership (359,000 acres or 67% *of the zone* under Alternatives 2 and 3, and 515,000 acres or 62% *of the zone* under Alternative 4). This zone also has the largest amount of lands in State ownership (48,000 acres or 9% *of the zone* under Alternatives 2 and 3, and 68,000 acres or 8% *of the zone* under Alternative 4).

The emphasis in Zone 3 is to consolidate ownership, which would maximize public values, provide public access, and improve efficiencies in public lands management. The BLM’s priorities for lands management in Zone 3 would be to:

- Maintain the total amount of public land in Zone 3, including lands adjacent to the Sawtooth National Forest and Craters of the Moon National Monument (since these adjoining lands provide public access and improve Federal interagency efficiencies); and
- Acquire, primarily through exchange, additional high resource value lands that improve the manageability of the public lands. (**Note:** These acquisitions would result in disposal of lower resource value and difficult-to-manage tracts of Zone 3 public lands).

Zone 3 lands are potentially suitable for disposal primarily by exchange; however, disposal of lands through sales and R&PP patents would also be allowed in this zone. Specific parcels within the zone may contain potentially high values for resources and land uses such as minerals, recreation, range, riparian, cultural resources, and wildlife habitat. These high-value parcels may not be suitable for disposal individually, except through exchange for equal resource value lands that are adjacent to existing public lands or that improve efficiencies in public land management. Each individual land tenure adjustment action would be required to comply with the guidelines in FLPMA, meet the Criteria for Land Ownership Adjustment (see Appendix 1), stand on its own merit through public input and review, and be in compliance with NEPA. Due to the present land ownership pattern, acquisition of public access would be a high priority in this zone.

Zone 4 lands are small to medium-sized blocks of public lands that are isolated from one another and from other public lands tracts in the Field Office area. Zone 4 public lands comprise only 56,000 acres, or 4% of the public lands administered by the Shoshone Field Office and 9% of all lands in Zone 4. The Isolated Wildlife Tract Program is managed on Zone 4 lands (and some Zone 2 lands) along the Snake River. Public lands in Zone 4 are potentially suitable for disposal primarily by exchange; if land exchanges are not feasible, then land tenure adjustment via sale or R&PP patent would be considered. The land tenure adjustment emphasis in Zone 4 should result in a net decrease in public lands acreage within the zone. However, there may be specific parcels within Zone 4 that contain potentially high values for resources and land uses such as minerals, recreation, range, riparian, cultural resources, and wildlife habitat. These parcels may not be suitable for disposal individually, except through exchange for equal resource value lands that are not fragmented or isolated from existing public lands.

Due to the present land ownership pattern in Zone 4, acquisition of public access would be a low priority in this zone. Each individual lands action would be required to comply with the guidelines in FLPMA, meet the Criteria for Land Ownership Adjustment (see Appendix 1), stand on its own merit through public input and review, and be in compliance with NEPA.

Zone 5 is generally described as an “Area of Influence of the Wood River Valley,” and includes those lands that are within the viewshed of the communities of Bellevue, Hailey, Ketchum, and Sun Valley, Idaho. This zone was created based on public comments and concerns communicated during the scoping period. Zone 5 would only exist under Alternatives 2 and 3, for under Alternative 4 these lands would be included in Zone 3 (see Map 3).

The land ownership characteristics of Zone 5 are very similar to Zone 3: public lands are small to medium-sized tracts interspersed with private and State lands. Zone 5 is a small land area, with only 121,000 acres of public lands (8% of lands administered by the Shoshone Field Office and 41% of lands within Zone 5). More acres within the zone are in private ownership than public ownership (156,000 acres of private lands, or 54% of the zone). State lands account for 20,000 acres or 7% of the zone.

The *general* land management strategy for Zone 5 is very similar to that of Zone 3. However, the concerns of the local Wood River Valley communities are addressed through some unique considerations within Zone 5.

Zone 5's General Land Tenure Management Strategy:

The emphasis in Zone 5 is to consolidate ownership, which would maximize public values, provide public access, and improve efficiencies in public lands management. The BLM's priorities for lands management in Zone 5 would be to:

- Maintain the total amount of public land in Zone 5, including lands adjacent to the Sawtooth National Forest (since these adjoining lands provide public access and improve Federal interagency efficiencies); and

- Acquire, primarily through exchange, additional high resource value lands that improve the manageability of the public lands. (**Note:** These acquisitions would result in disposal of lower resource value and difficult-to-manage tracts of Zone 5 public lands).

Zone 5 lands are potentially suitable for disposal primarily by exchange; however, disposal of lands through sales and R&PP patents would also be allowed in this zone. Specific parcels within the zone may contain potentially high values for resources and land uses such as minerals, recreation, range, riparian, cultural resources, and wildlife habitat. These high-value parcels may not be suitable for disposal individually, except through exchange for equal resource value lands that are adjacent to existing public lands or that improve efficiencies in public land management. Each individual land tenure adjustment action would be required to comply with the guidelines in FLPMA, meet the Criteria for Land Ownership Adjustment (see Appendix 1), stand on its own merit through public input and review, and be in compliance with NEPA. Due to the present land ownership pattern, acquisition of public access would be a high priority in this zone.

Zone 5's Unique Considerations to Address Local Concerns:

Several local concerns are addressed through the unique characteristics of proposed land tenure management for Zone 5. These concerns include (a) the local governments' interest in acquiring public lands to benefit the local community; (b) interagency (BLM and IDFG) and local residents' concerns about wildlife habitat fragmentation; (c) wildfire risks; (d) retention of "open space" (undeveloped landscapes) and scenic values; (e) motorized and non-motorized recreation opportunities and access; and (f) floodplain protection.

In each proposed lands transaction, the following factors need to be considered *in addition* to the standard Criteria for Land Ownership Adjustment (see Appendix 1).

- the local (city or county) government's interest in acquiring public lands to support infrastructure and extend community services;
- the extent to which the transaction would provide for high quality continuous habitat by retaining existing wildlife habitat and reducing the extent of fragmented wildlife habitat;
- the extent to which the transaction would reduce hazardous fuels and the risk of wildfire;
- the ability of the lands action to retain "open space" (undeveloped landscapes) and protect scenic corridors,
- the extent to which the lands action would facilitate ongoing or future motorized and non-motorized trails and other public access; and
- the extent to which the lands action would protect floodplains from development.

Furthermore, the lands proposal evaluation must consider the public values acquired and local factors addressed by acquiring State or private lands, versus the public values relinquished and local factors addressed when ownership transfers from the BLM.

The following land tenure adjustment criteria also specifically apply to Zone 5:

- Exchanges would be considered to the extent that they result in no net loss of public lands within Zone 5. The BLM's goal for this zone is to maintain the public land acreage by exchanging public land in other zones for private land in Zone 5.

- The BLM would prefer disposal through R&PP patent to local or State government entities (since these are expected to provide management of the lands over the long term versus a nonprofit organization) when the BLM’s priorities, the local or State government’s priorities, and the public’s needs are met by the patent process.
- Disposal through land sales would only be for small (generally less than 10 acres), isolated parcels left from mining patents or a resurvey by the USDI Cadastral Survey. Many of these parcels are less than an acre and are difficult to identify without researching the Master Title Plats; because of their small size, they often do not show up on land status maps. The priority would be to pool these numerous small parcels for disposal and exchange them for high resource value parcels within Zone 5.

Criteria for Land Ownership Adjustment

In addition to complying with guidelines for land tenure adjustment that are stated in FLPMA, a lands proposal must fit within the relevant zone’s management strategy (see “Lands Status and Management Zones” descriptions above) and meet the criteria for land ownership adjustment listed in Appendix 1 (see pages 123-124). The proposed action would be compared with the criteria to see if the proposal fits within the highest priorities for retention, acquisition, or disposal.

Other Issues Common to All Zones and Action Alternatives

Desert Land Entry and Carey Act

Applications: The eighteen Desert Land Entry and three Carey Act applications currently on file with the BLM are in Zone 2. Under all alternatives to existing management, Desert Land Entry (DLE) Act and Carey Act applications currently on file will be processed and a determination made as to whether they meet the suitability requirements under those laws. Cases meeting all the requirements will be transferred out of public ownership. New applications will not be accepted under Alternatives 2, 3, and 4.

Current Desert Land Entry (DLE) Applications:

- IDI 29776, 29777 and 29782 between Wendell and Gooding.
- IDI 27342, 27343, 27344, 27345, 27406, 27443, 27444, 27472, 27855, 27857, 27858, 27859, 28096, 28144 and 28145 in Hidden Valley between Dietrich and Kimama and below State Highway 24.

Current Carey Act Applications:

- IDI 9897, 9483 and 9487. (These overlap with the same DLE applicants between Wendell and Gooding.)

Water Rights Policy on Land Use

Authorizations: Adherence to Idaho water rights policy will be a condition of use on all existing, new, or renewed farming permits, leases, or agreements. When an existing permit is renewed, current Idaho BLM’s State-wide policy is that any privately-held water right place of water use (POU) on public land shall either be removed from public land, or be transferred to the United States through the Bureau of Land Management. It is also BLM’s policy that a privately-owned water right with a point of diversion (POD) on privately-owned property, but one or more places of water use on public land, shall be split and transferred to the United States, in proportion to the amount of water used on public land to the total water used on all land, both private and public; this transfer would be made for the duration of time the permitted use of public lands is authorized.

Acquisitions: Acquisitions, including easements, can be completed through exchange, Land and Water Conservation Funds (LWCF) purchases, donations, or receipts from Federal Land Transaction Facilitation Act sales or exchanges.

Access: When developing or evaluating land tenure adjustment proposals, the BLM would seek to acquire legal public or administrative access and prevent relinquishment of such access. However, the emphasis on initiating lands actions in order to acquire access (versus completing other types of lands transactions) would vary by alternative and zone.

Resolution of Split Mineral Estate: The BLM would seek to reduce or eliminate the split mineral estate whenever the opportunity arises. The priority would be to identify groups of landowners interested in acquiring their sub-surface mineral values, and to pool these values in order to acquire high resource value parcels through sale or exchange. Future lands transactions would follow current policy on transfer of sub-surface mineral values (current policy is to not split estates when completing a land tenure transaction).

ACECs - Alternative Formulation

The BLM evaluated 10 areas that were nominated for ACEC designation (see Map 4). The purpose of an ACEC designation is to focus management attention on special resources located at these sites. Attention to these particular areas was brought about through scoping and comments on the Supplemental Draft Bennett Hills RMP, through individual and/or group nominations, and from BLM staff recommendations. The BLM used a screening process – the ACEC Criteria Review Checklist (see *Appendix 3*) – as an initial evaluation to determine if the nominated area met basic relevance and importance criteria for designation. The BLM considered the appropriate amount of land needed to protect the resource values reflected in each nomination; the nominated ACECs cannot have their boundaries changed without substantially affecting their reason for nomination.

The ACECs evaluation was based on guidance provided by 43 CFR 1610.7-2 and BLM Manual Section 1613, which state that potential ACECs must meet specified criteria for relevance and importance. Relevance is based on the presence of a significant

- historic, cultural, or scenic value;
- fish or wildlife resource or other natural system or process; or
- natural hazard.

Upon meeting the relevance criteria, a nominated site must then have substantial significance and values that meet one or more of the “importance” criteria:

- Has more than locally significant qualities which give it special worth, consequence, meaning, distinctiveness, or cause for concern, especially compared to any similar resource.

- Has qualities or circumstances that make it fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change.
- Has been recognized as warranting protection in order to satisfy national priority concerns or to carry out the mandates of FLPMA.
- Has qualities which warrant highlighting in order to satisfy public or management concerns about safety and public welfare.
- Poses a significant threat to human life and safety or to property.

Based on these requirements, three of the ten nominated ACECs were dropped from further consideration because they did not meet the relevance and importance criteria (see “Alternatives Considered but Not Analyzed in Detail” section on page 24).

ACEC Nominations That Did Not Meet Relevance and Importance Criteria:

The ACEC nomination for Fir Grove ACEC did not meet the required criteria for relevance and importance. The ACEC criteria review checklist for this nominated ACEC is available for review in Appendix 3 (see pp. 154-155). There will be no further consideration of this nominated ACEC within this document.

Fir Grove: The nominated site contains the only known stand of an isolated Douglas-fir community south of Camas Creek in the Bennett Hills. Fire appears to be the only threat to this stand, and this threat is mitigated by the fact that the stand lies on a north-facing slope and the site is identified for full fire suppression. In addition, Fir Grove is not part of the Upper Snake River District commercial timber base and would therefore not be subject to timber management activities. Current management is sufficient to protect the values at this site.

ACEC Nominations That Meet Relevance, but Not Importance, Criteria:

The Big Wood/Warm Springs and King’s Crown ACEC nominations met the relevance criteria, but failed to meet the importance criteria for ACEC designation. For this reason, they are not considered further within this document. The ACEC criteria review checklists for these nominated ACECs are available for review in Appendix 3 (see pp. 136-138 and 156-157).

Big Wood/Warm Springs: This approximately 236-acre area meets relevance criteria due to its scenic values. However, the area does not possess more than locally significant qualities or have special worth, consequence, meaning, distinctiveness, or cause for concern. No additional special management needs are identified for this area that can be implemented through these amendments.

King’s Crown: This approximately 10-acre area was nominated based on the presence of two undisturbed plant communities. The natural system is not in jeopardy, due to its inaccessibility by humans and livestock. Wildfire is the only known risk, and this risk is mitigated by the natural features of the mesa (which is surrounded by cliffs). If a wildfire occurred, the area is identified for full fire suppression.

ACEC Nominations That Meet Relevance and Importance Criteria:

The Bennett Hills, Camas Creek, Coyote Hills and Dry Creek ACEC nominations met the relevance and importance criteria and are proposed for ACEC designation under Alternative 2. However, it is uncertain that ACEC designation is needed to provide special management for the identified resources or values, because current management, regulation, and law provide sufficient protection for the values identified; therefore, ACEC designation may not be necessary. The ACEC criteria review checklists for these ACECs are available for review in Appendix 3 (see pp. 130-135 and 140-152).

Bennett Hills: This approximately 381,471-acre area meets relevance and importance criteria for cultural values.

Camas Creek: This approximately 420-acre area meets relevance and importance criteria for significant scenic values and a natural (riparian) system.

Coyote Hills: This approximately 49,062-acre area (which includes the original Coyote Hills and Little City of Rocks ACEC nominations) meets relevance and importance criteria for significant cultural values.

Dry Creek: This approximately 869-acre area meets relevance and importance criteria for significant scenic values and a natural (riparian) system.

The remaining three nominated ACECs, the King Hill Creek, McKinney Butte, and Tee-Maze ACECs, met both the relevance and importance criteria. In addition, a change in management appears to be needed to provide sufficient protection for the identified resources or values. The ACEC criteria review checklists for these ACECs are available for review in Appendix 3 (see pp. 158-172).

King Hill Creek: This approximately 3,200-acre area meets relevance and importance criteria for significant scenic values, fish resources, and a natural (riparian) system.

McKinney Butte: This approximately 3,764-acre area meets relevance and importance criteria for significant scenic values, wildlife resources, and natural systems and processes.

Tee-Maze: This approximately 10,762-acre area meets relevance and importance criteria for significant scenic values, wildlife resources, and natural systems and processes.

Table 3 below summarizes the ACEC nominations received and whether they are proposed for designation in these amendments. Table 4 lists the special management identified for each proposed ACEC (see pages 46-54).

Table 3: Summary of ACEC Nominations and Proposed ACECs*(Note: Acres are approximate)*

Nominated ACEC	Not Proposed	Proposed for Designation		
		Alternative 2	Alternative 3 (BLM Preferred)	Alternative 4
Bennett Hills - 381,471 acres <i>ACEC values:</i> cultural		X		
Big Wood/Warm Springs - 236 acres	X ²			
Camas Creek - 420 acres <i>ACEC values:</i> scenic, natural system or process		X		
Coyote Hills - 49,062 acres <i>ACEC values:</i> cultural		X		
Dry Creek - 869 acres <i>ACEC values:</i> scenic, natural system or process		X		
Fir Grove - 45 acres	X ¹			
King's Crown - 10 acres	X ²			
King Hill Creek - 2,880 acres <i>ACEC values:</i> scenic, fish resource, natural system or process		X	X	X
McKinney Butte - 3,764 acres <i>ACEC values:</i> scenic, wildlife resource, natural system or process		X	X	X
Tee-Maze - 10,762 acres <i>ACEC values:</i> scenic, wildlife resource, natural system or process		X	X	X
Total Acres Proposed for Designation		385,235 acres³	17,406 acres	17,406 acres

¹ The Fir Grove nominated ACEC did not meet required relevance and importance criteria for ACEC designation.

² The Big Wood/Warm Springs and King's Crown nominated ACECs met relevance criteria for ACEC designation, but did not meet importance criteria.

³ The total acres for Alternative 2 takes into account that five of the proposed ACECs (Camas Creek, Coyote Hills, Dry Creek, King Hill Creek, and Tee-Maze) would lie within the boundaries of the Bennett Hills ACEC.

Comparison of Alternatives

Table 4 displays relevant management from the existing land use plans (Alternative 1) and the three alternative amendments to the existing plans (Alternatives 2, 3, and 4). Alternative 3 is the BLM's preferred alternative. The table is presented in a comparative format, with the land tenure adjustment issue and related concerns discussed first, followed by the proposed designations of and management for new Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs).

Table 4: Shoshone Land Use Plans Draft Amendments - Alternatives

Issue/Concern	Alternative 1 No Action	Alternative 2	Alternative 3 (BLM Preferred)	Alternative 4
Land Tenure Adjustment				
Summary	Land tenure adjustments would continue to be considered on a case-by-case basis as long as the public lands involved are specifically identified for disposal in one of the existing land use plans. Appendix 6 lists existing land tenure adjustment areas and remaining specific tracts identified for disposal (also see Map 2). These lands were identified for disposal as of July 25, 2000, and may therefore be sold or exchanged under the Federal Land Transaction Facilitation Act.	Land tenure actions under Alternatives 2 through 4 would amend the following land use plans: Magic MFP, Bennett Hills/Timmerman Hills MFP, Sun Valley MFP, and Monument RMP. Zone designations and other actions stated in the previous section titled “Management Common to All Three Action Alternatives” (see pp. 26-32) would be implemented. Each land tenure adjustment proposal would be reviewed on a case-by-case basis and evaluated to see if it meets the intent of FLPMA, the guidelines for the relevant Lands Status and Management Zone(s) (Zones 1-5 under Alternatives 2 and 3; Zones 1-4 under Alternative 4), and the Criteria for Land Ownership Adjustment presented in Appendix 1. Land tenure adjustments would seek to facilitate a watershed approach to natural resource management, in order to improve efficiencies in public lands management. The BLM would also seek to acquire high resource value lands made available by willing land owners.		
		Disposal of public lands with high resource values would generally be discouraged or prohibited, unless the disposal would result in acquisition of even higher valued lands. Disposal of lower resource value public lands would be considered; however, disposals that emphasize resource values and/or management efficiency would be higher in priority than those that address community or private landowner needs.	Depending on the merits of each proposal, disposal of public lands would be a priority if the disposal provided opportunity to consolidate public lands, accommodate the need for community expansion, improve management in areas of high resource values, and/or resolve long-standing unauthorized uses.	Unmanageable, isolated public lands would be a priority for disposal. Isolated parcels would generally be identified as those isolated by ownership or physical barriers such as canals or roadways.
Acquisition Priorities	Acquisition priorities would be as stated in the current land use plans.	The BLM’s acquisition priority would be to acquire land with high resource values.	The BLM’s acquisition priorities would be to reconnect habitats within priority watersheds and to acquire other lands with high resource values.	Same as Alternative 2.

Issue/Concern	Alternative 1 No Action	Alternative 2	Alternative 3 (BLM Preferred)	Alternative 4
Land Sales and Exchanges	The BLM's first priority will always be to use land exchanges rather than land sales. Lands considered for disposal through sale must meet the intent of FLPMA, Section 203(a) (1) (i.e., be difficult and uneconomical to manage) or FLPMA, Section 203(a) (3) (i.e., meet public objectives such as community expansion and economic development).			
	Disposal of public lands through sale or exchange will only be considered on lands currently identified for potential disposal (see Appendix 6).	Disposal of public lands through sale or exchange would be allowed in Zones 2, 3, 4, and 5. Sales would only be allowed in Zone 5 if the tracts are small, isolated parcels left from mining patents or resurvey by the USDI cadastral survey. Sales would be a low priority, due to increased emphasis on land exchanges.	Same as Alternative 2, except public land sales would be in balance with, and, if possible, pooled with State and private land exchanges to facilitate a watershed approach and thereby improve efficiencies in public lands management.	Disposal of public lands through sale or exchange would be allowed in Zones 2, 3, and 4 (Zone 5 would not exist). This alternative would emphasize land sales when appropriate to meet the needs of the adjoining landowners and the BLM in a timely manner.
	Almost 49,973 acres of public lands were identified for disposal as of July 25, 2000 (see Appendix 6). Proceeds from the sale or exchange of these lands can be used to purchase additional public lands, as provided for in the Federal Land Transaction Facilitation Act.	Approximately 45,739 acres of public lands identified for disposal as of July 25, 2000, would continue to be available for disposal (see Appendix 6, tracts shown in standard type). Proceeds from the sale or exchange of these public lands may be used to purchase additional public lands, as provided for in the Federal Land Transaction Facilitation Act. [Note: The 4,233 acres shown in bold type in Appendix 6 do not meet the plan amendments' criteria for disposal and would therefore not be available for disposal.]		
State Land Exchanges	Disposal of public lands through exchange for State lands would only be considered on public lands currently identified for potential disposal (see Appendix 6).	Alternative 2 would emphasize land exchanges with the State of Idaho (rather than private landowners) and retention of lands with high resource values, in order to reconnect fragmented habitats and meet the needs of the State and the BLM.	State land exchanges would be in balance with, and, if possible, pooled with private land exchanges to facilitate a watershed approach and thereby improve efficiencies in public lands management.	State land exchanges would be a low priority due to an increased emphasis on private land exchanges.

Issue/Concern	Alternative 1 No Action	Alternative 2	Alternative 3 (BLM Preferred)	Alternative 4
Private Land Exchanges	Disposal of public lands through exchange for private lands would only be considered on public lands currently identified for potential disposal (see Appendix 6).	Private land exchanges would be a low priority (even if those lands offer opportunity to reconnect fragmented habitat) because of an increased emphasis on State land exchanges.	Private land exchanges would be in balance with, and, if possible, pooled with State land exchanges to facilitate a watershed approach in order to improve efficiencies in public land management.	Alternative 4 would emphasize private land exchanges over State land exchanges, to meet the needs of the general public and the BLM.
Desert Land Entry Act/ Carey Act Applications and Lands Transfer	The tracts currently applied for under the Desert Land Entry (DLE) Act and Carey Act are not identified for disposal in the existing land use plans and therefore cannot be disposed of. Future DLE and Carey Act applications would only be processed for lands that are identified as disposal parcels (see Appendix 6) and also meet the criteria of the Acts.	Current Desert Land Entry Act and Carey Act applications would be processed, and lands meeting the criteria of the Acts would be disposed of. No new DLE or Carey Act applications would be accepted.		
Recreation and Public Purposes (R&PP) Act Leases and Patents	Existing leases would continue to be allowed. Patent of these leased lands or other proposed lands would only be allowed if the public lands are identified for disposal in Appendix 6.	R&PP leases and patents would be allowed in Zones 2, 3, 4, and 5. Proposed patents in Zone 5 must meet the additional criterion for that zone. In Zone 5 the BLM would prefer disposal through R&PP patent to local or State government entities (since these are expected to provide management of the lands over the long term, versus a nonprofit organization) when the BLM's priorities, the local or State government's priorities, and the public's needs are met by the patent process.		R&PP leases and patents would be allowed in Zones 2, 3, and 4 (Zone 5 would not exist). However, opportunities to address community needs would be limited due to competing priorities.
Aquifer Recharge Sites	The existing recharge site would continue to be allowed as per the signed Cooperative Agreement. All future recharge site authorizations would be made through right-of-way grants.	The existing recharge site authorized in Zone 1 would be retained in public ownership and continued to be authorized through the signed Cooperative Agreement. The site within Zone 2 that has been approved by the BLM through a signed Decision Record would be made available for acquisition through exchange with the State of Idaho. The BLM will also allow the State to exchange for recharge sites identified within Zones 2 or 4, if the sites are approved through the NEPA process; no future recharge site authorizations would be allowed. Ancillary support for existing and future recharge sites (e.g., monitoring wells, access roads, etc.) may be authorized on public lands by issuing a right-of-way, if the action is approved through the NEPA process.		

Issue/Concern	Alternative 1 No Action	Alternative 2	Alternative 3 (BLM Preferred)	Alternative 4
Communication Sites	The existing communication sites are not identified for disposal and would continue to be managed using current policy and procedures. All future communication site authorizations would be made through right-of-way grants. The existing plans do not address disposal of communication sites to the State of Idaho.	The communication sites within the planning area that have been approved by the BLM through right-of-way grants would be made available for acquisition through exchange with the State of Idaho. The BLM would allow the State to exchange for entire communication site complexes and any other additional area needed for ancillary support for the sites identified in Zones 2-5 (Zones 2-4 in Alternative 4), if the sites are approved through the NEPA process. Ancillary support for existing and future communication sites (e.g., power lines, access roads, etc.) would not be authorized on public lands once the sites are transferred to the State. Any transfer of public lands would be subject to all valid existing rights, including existing rights-of-way.		
Isolated Wildlife Tract Program	Continue to manage the Isolated Wildlife Tract Program within the guidelines and direction in the existing land use plans. Continue the present cooperative agreement with the Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG).	Continue to manage the Isolated Wildlife Tract Program on existing lands, and look for opportunities to expand the program onto additional isolated public lands. IDFG would accept complete management responsibility for the program through a Memorandum of Agreement.	Continue to manage the Isolated Wildlife Tract Program on existing lands, and look for opportunities in partnership with IDFG to exchange the current properties for higher value properties that are adjacent to BLM, have equal or higher wildlife values, and help reconnect fragmented habitats within priority watersheds. As isolated lands are disposed of, the program would be reduced accordingly. Continue the present cooperative agreement with IDFG.	The Isolated Wildlife Tract Program would be discontinued by disposing of the isolated tracts through exchange or sale. The program would continue to be managed on existing lands until disposal has occurred. The present cooperative agreement with IDFG would continue until all tracts are disposed of.

Issue/Concern	Alternative 1 No Action	Alternative 2	Alternative 3 (BLM Preferred)	Alternative 4
Management Direction for Future Land Use Permits and Resolution of Unauthorized Use (e.g., farming, equipment storage, material disposal, fences)	The BLM has historically granted temporary use permits to authorize various uses on lands that are pending transfer.	While waiting for a land tenure action to be completed, new land use permits, leases, or agreements would not be allowed on the public lands being considered for disposal. In areas not identified for disposal (e.g., Zone 1), consideration of new land use permits, leases, or agreements would be a low priority.		
	Current Shoshone Field Office policy does not allow new permits to cross BLM lands for the sole benefit of private farming practices (i.e., dry or wet pivot lines).	Permits to cross BLM lands for the sole benefit of private farming practices (i.e., dry or wet pivot lines) will not be approved. No form of waste water application will be approved.		
	Resolution of long-term and new unauthorized uses will continue to be dealt with on a case-by-case basis as BLM priorities allow.	Resolution of long-term unauthorized uses through land tenure adjustments will be a lower priority than the priority to retain or acquire high value lands.	Resolution of long-term unauthorized uses through land tenure adjustment would be equal in priority to retaining or acquiring high resource value lands.	Resolution of long-term unauthorized uses through land tenure adjustment would be greater in priority than retaining or acquiring high resource value lands.
	Existing cases of unauthorized use may be resolved through disposal by sale or exchange, if the affected lands are currently identified for disposal (see Appendix 6).	Existing permits, leases, or agreements that currently authorize known trespass will be retired within 18 months of the date the permit, lease, or agreement expires, and all agreed-to rehabilitation will occur to the satisfaction of the authorized officer within 36 months of the date the permit, lease, or agreement expires.		Unauthorized uses occurring prior to December 31, 1989 (the date of the most recent aerial photos for the planning area), will be given opportunity for a land use lease or agreement to continue the use until a resolution can be reached. Recent unauthorized uses (since December 31, 1989) will be resolved on a case-by-case basis as priorities allow.

Issue/Concern	Alternative 1 No Action	Alternative 2	Alternative 3 (BLM Preferred)	Alternative 4
Resolution of Unauthorized Use <i>(continued)</i>	<p>Renewal of existing land use permits would continue to be handled on a case-by-case basis and in accordance with current policy.</p>	<p>Public lands with unauthorized uses that are temporarily authorized by existing land use permits, leases, or agreements will be evaluated for disposal. Those lands meeting the disposal criteria in Appendix 1 will become a low priority for land tenure adjustment.</p>	<p>Public lands with unauthorized uses that are temporarily authorized by existing land use permits, leases, or agreements will be evaluated for disposal in a “pooled lands” approach with the assistance of local county governments, in order to meet the needs of all land owners and the public. Isolated BLM parcels (isolated from other BLM properties or isolated due to structures like highways or major irrigation canals) may be sold.</p>	<p>Public lands with unauthorized uses that are temporarily authorized by existing land use permits, leases, or agreements will be evaluated for disposal. Those lands meeting the disposal criteria in Appendix 1 will become a high priority for land tenure adjustment. In contrast to Alternatives 2 and 3, those public lands not meeting the criteria will be offered to continue the unauthorized use under a long-term lease or agreement. Isolated BLM parcels (i.e., isolated from other BLM properties or isolated due to structures like highways or major irrigation canals) may be sold.</p>
	<p>New cases of unauthorized use, or situations the BLM becomes aware of after these amendments are approved, will be resolved by current laws, regulations, and priorities. In the future, no new land use permits, leases, or agreements will be authorized to validate unauthorized use.</p>			
Water Rights	<p>Current Idaho water rights laws and BLM water policies will be adhered to.</p>			

Issue/Concern	Alternative 1 No Action	Alternative 2	Alternative 3 (BLM Preferred)	Alternative 4
Private/Public Land Boundary Adjustments Within and Adjacent to Zone 2	Disposal of public lands bordering other land ownerships would not be allowed unless the parcels are currently identified for disposal (see Appendix 6).	Public lands within ½ -mile of either side of the Zone 2 boundary will be considered potentially suitable for disposal primarily by exchange (and secondarily by sale or R&PP patent), <i>unless</i> that ½-mile extends into a Zone 1 (retention) area.		
		The land exchange emphasis would be to exchange those State land inholdings within ½-mile of the Zone 2 boundary that would improve efficiencies in management for both the State of Idaho and the BLM. Private/public land boundary adjustments within ½-mile of the Zone 2 boundary would only be allowed if the BLM would acquire private lands with high resource values.	Private/public land boundary adjustments within ½-mile of the Zone 2 boundary would be a priority if the land tenure adjustment provided opportunity to consolidate public lands, accommodate the need for community expansion, improve management in areas of high resource values, and/or resolve long-standing unauthorized uses.	Private/public land boundary adjustments within ½-mile of the Zone 2 boundary would be a priority if the land tenure adjustment accommodated the needs of private landowners.
Split Estate Mineral Values (private surface owner/ BLM subsurface owner)	Although the existing land use plans are silent on the specific action of exchanging or selling BLM sub-surface minerals for private surface lands, current policy allows the sale or exchange of mineral rights.	The exchange or sale of BLM sub-surface minerals for private surface lands would be allowed in Zones 2, 3, 4, and 5. The BLM would seek to reduce or eliminate the split mineral estate whenever the opportunity arises. The priority would be to identify groups of landowners interested in acquiring their sub-surface mineral values, and to pool these values in order to acquire high resource value parcels through sale or exchange. Future lands transactions would follow current policy on transfer of sub-surface mineral values (current policy is to not split estates when completing a land tenure transaction).		
Priorities for Consolidating Land Ownership <i>First priority will always be to use land exchanges rather than land sales.</i>	Acquisitions and disposals will be as described in the existing land use plans. Parcels not identified for disposal in Appendix 6 would require an individual, timely, and costly plan amendment prior to consideration of the land tenure adjustment proposal, and thus are not a priority to complete.	Priority is to retain all high resource value lands and acquire additional high resource value lands, while considering opportunities to consolidate lands made available by a willing land owner. A priority is also to reconnect habitats within priority watersheds.	Priority is to retain and acquire additional high resource value lands made available by a willing land owner, while considering opportunities to consolidate lands. High resource value lands will be retained unless equal or higher resource value lands are available. A priority is also to reconnect habitats within priority watersheds.	Opportunities to consolidate lands to improve efficiencies in public land management would be a higher priority than the requirement to retain or acquire high resource value lands. Land tenure adjustments would not necessarily seek to address habitat fragmentation.

Issue/Concern	Alternative 1 No Action	Alternative 2	Alternative 3 (BLM Preferred)	Alternative 4
Zone 5 Considerations	<p>The following definitions apply for the purposes of this table:</p> <p>“Open space” is defined as a primitive and peaceful area that provides solitude, and where the public lands user would tread lightly and leave no trace of having been there. The “open space” definition accommodates all approved permits, developments, land uses, and activities at the time a land tenure adjustment occurs.</p> <p>“Local governments” include Blaine County and the Cities of Bellevue, Hailey, Ketchum and Sun Valley.</p>			
<i>Lands to Support Local Needs</i>	<p>Acquisitions and disposals within the Wood River Valley will be as described in the existing land use plans. Parcels not identified for disposal in Appendix 6 would require an individual, timely, and costly plan amendment prior to consideration of the land tenure adjustment proposal, and thus are not a priority to complete.</p>	<p>“Reasonably necessary” sized parcels of public land may be made available for disposal through the R&PP Act, preferably directly to local governments, to support local needs for community infrastructure and extended services.</p>	<p>Same as Alternative 2. In addition, community needs would be accommodated to the greatest extent possible.</p>	<p>Zone 5 would not exist under Alternative 4. Public lands in the Wood River Valley area would be managed according to the definition of Zone 3. Public lands in that area can be made available for disposal through the R&PP Act to support local needs for infrastructure and extended services; however, opportunities to address community needs would be limited due to competing priorities.</p>

Issue/Concern	Alternative 1 No Action	Alternative 2	Alternative 3 (BLM Preferred)	Alternative 4
Zone 5 Considerations <i>(continued)</i> “Open Space” Concept	<p>The existing land use plans do not provide any management direction to address the topic of “open space.”</p>	<p>In Zone 5 the following three actions would be emphasized to promote “open space”: 1) Generally, public lands will be retained as “open space.” 2) No additional permits, leases, or agreements will be authorized, and existing permits, leases, or agreements will not be expanded. Any expansion of existing rights-of-way must remain within existing corridors. New rights-of-way will only be allowed where there will be minimal visual impact to open space. 3) Access will remain as currently authorized; no additional access developments would be authorized.</p>	<p>In Zone 5 the following would be emphasized to promote open space: Pool numerous small, low public value parcels and acquire through exchanges high resource priority parcels to complement the BLM and local governments’ Master and/or Comprehensive Plans.</p>	<p>The priority for acquisition within Zone 3 is to acquire, primarily through exchange, additional high resource value lands that improve the manageability of the public lands. These transactions may or may not address the “open space” or government infrastructure concerns of local Wood River Valley residents.</p>
Acquisition of Access	<p>Knowing that limited resources are available to acquire access through individual actions (unless access is acquired as a component of another proposed transaction), future access needs and priorities will be coordinated with the Shoshone-Bannock and Shoshone-Paiute Tribes, IDFG, and local governments to ensure resource values are evaluated along with public needs.</p> <p>Existing public access will be retained.</p>			
	<p>Legal administrative and/or public access may be acquired through purchase, easement, or other means.</p>	<p>When evaluating proposals for acquisition of access, the BLM will seek to address concerns about over-development, over-use, and habitat fragmentation. New points of access would seek to protect both the acquired access area and the resources accessed by that area (e.g., parking area next to a trailhead; pull-off next to a fishing hole).</p>		

[continued]

Issue/Concern	Alternative 1 No Action	Alternative 2	Alternative 3 (BLM Preferred)	Alternative 4
Acquisition of Access <i>(continued)</i>		The BLM would seek to acquire legal public access through easements or other means. Retention and acquisition of public access will be limited to the minimum required to gain access to large blocks of Federal lands while maintaining protection of private property rights.	The BLM would seek to balance acquisition of legal public and administrative access.	The BLM would seek to acquire legal administrative access. Retention and acquisition of public access will be limited to the minimum required to gain access to large blocks of Federal lands while maintaining protection of private property rights.
Forest Resources	No public lands in the timber base are currently identified for disposal to the general public. The Sun Valley MFP identifies public lands with forest resources for transfer to the Forest Service only.	All public lands in the timber base would be retained in public ownership.	Small, isolated, and hard to manage public lands in the timber base would be considered for disposal if they meet these amendments' criteria for disposal (zone definition, Appendix 1 criteria).	Public lands in the timber base would be considered for disposal if they meet these amendments' criteria for disposal (zone definition, Appendix 1 criteria).

Issue/Concern	Alternative 1 No Action	Alternative 2	Alternative 3 (BLM Preferred)	Alternative 4
Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) Proposed Designations				
Summary	No additional ACECs are proposed for designation. Management of the ten nominated, but not proposed, ACEC lands (approximately 385,526 acres) would continue as specified under the existing land use plans.	The BLM would designate seven additional ACECs totaling approximately 385,235 acres: Bennett Hills, Camas Creek, Dry Creek, Coyote Hills, King Hill Creek, McKinney Butte, and Tee-Maze. Management of the three nominated, but not proposed, ACEC areas (approximately 291 acres) would continue as specified under the existing land use plans.	The BLM would designate three additional ACECs totaling approximately 17,406 acres: King Hill Creek, McKinney Butte, and Tee-Maze. Management of the seven nominated, but not proposed, ACEC areas (approximately 368,120 acres) would continue as specified under the existing land use plans.	
Notes: Within this table the terms “relevance” and “importance” refer to those ACEC values that met <u>both</u> relevance and importance criteria during the ACEC nomination review process (see Appendix 3). These are the values for which the ACEC is being proposed for designation and the values for which protective management is also proposed. Some areas proposed as an ACEC also meet qualifications for a Research Natural Area (RNA) designation - i.e., the ACEC contains natural resource values of scientific interest and would be managed primarily for research and educational purposes.				
Management Common to All Proposed ACECs	Not applicable.	Any future land uses or activities approved within an ACEC must not impair the values, resources, systems, and/or processes for which the ACEC was designated. Off-road vehicle use (cross-country use) would be allowed within areas with a “closed” or “limited” off-highway vehicle use designation under these circumstances: (a) any military, fire, emergency, or law enforcement vehicle while being used for emergency purposes; (b) any vehicle whose use is expressly authorized by the authorized officer or otherwise officially approved; (c) vehicles in official use (43 CFR 8340.0-7); (d) vehicles being used by members or representatives of the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes or Shoshone-Paiute Tribes to access traditional use areas of importance to the Tribes; and (e) vehicles being used by members of the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes to exercise their tribally reserved treaty rights.		

Issue/Concern	Alternative 1 No Action	Alternative 2	Alternative 3 (BLM Preferred)	Alternative 4
<p>Bennett Hills ACEC</p> <p><u>Relevance:</u> Cultural resources including prehistoric sites, pictographs, petroglyphs, and possibly tools and artifacts.</p> <p><u>Importance:</u> The identified cultural values are fragile, irreplaceable resources that have already been damaged by illegal excavation. Unusual concentrations of sites indicates special significance to aboriginal populations.</p>	<p>The nominated Bennett Hills ACEC would not be proposed for designation. Continue to implement relevant existing management from the Bennett Hills/Timmerman Hills MFP (1976), including the following summary of actions: manage mule deer, elk, and antelope habitat to provide food and cover for specified populations; improve 283,000 acres of sage grouse brood rearing habitat; manage for a maximum diversity of vegetative species in order to meet the habitat requirements for a variety of wildlife species; provide for the protection and conservation of threatened or endangered plants; and implement management practices on all grazing lands in the Bennett Hills area to reach and maintain good range condition.</p>	<p>Designate approximately 381,471 acres as the Bennett Hills ACEC (see Map 5), including approximately 1,220 acres within the Four Rivers Field Office area (along King Hill Creek). Implement the following actions to protect the identified cultural values: (a) Develop a Cultural Resource Management Plan which emphasizes National Register District nomination; curation of collections; limitations on any activity that may adversely impact cultural resources; fire suppression guidelines; annual reporting procedures; physical protection measures; regulatory and/or interpretive signs; law enforcement; erosion control; and site stabilization. (b) Limit mineral material sales and free use permits to existing sites and public lands adjacent to State Highway 75, State Highway 46, and the Bliss-Hill City Road. (c) Limit motorized vehicle use to designated and signed roads and trails. (d) Permitting for professional research will follow the process outlined in BLM Manual 1851 for Cultural Resource Use Permits.</p>	<p>Same as Alternative 1.</p>	

Issue/Concern	Alternative 1 No Action	Alternative 2	Alternative 3 (BLM Preferred)	Alternative 4
<p><i>Camas Creek ACEC/RNA</i></p> <p>Relevance: Scenic canyon and pristine low elevation riparian system which includes two rare plant species.</p> <p>Importance: Canyon is readily visible from a major highway. Riparian system is a valuable reference area for future scientific study.</p>	<p>The nominated Camas Creek ACEC would not be proposed for designation. Management of the Camas Creek area would continue as described in the Bennett Hills/Timmerman Hills MFP (see Bennett Hills ACEC “Alternative 1” description on page 47 above) (Note: The MFP contains no specific management decisions for Camas Creek.)</p>	<p>Designate approximately 420 acres as the Camas Creek ACEC/RNA (see Map 7). Implement the following actions to protect and highlight management of the identified scenic and riparian values: (a) Work with adjacent private landowners on coordinated riparian management. (b) Acquire private sections of the stream under a willing-seller basis or through exchange. Explore opportunities for conservation easements. (c) Close the ACEC to livestock grazing, except for sheep trailing (no overnight stays) within the wing fences at the Macon Sheep Bridge. Wing fences will be built at the Macon Sheep Bridge to allow for sheep trailing through the Camas Creek area. Temporary management to prevent sheep grazing impacts will be required until the fences are built. (d) Implement actions to re-establish the potential natural community along the entire reach. (e) Seek to eliminate non-native invasive plant species. (f) Exclude the ACEC from new land use authorizations (e.g., rights-of-way, R&PP Act leases, land use permits).</p> <p style="text-align: right;">[continued]</p>	<p>Same as Alternative 1.</p>	

Issue/Concern	Alternative 1 No Action	Alternative 2	Alternative 3 (BLM Preferred)	Alternative 4
<i>Camas Creek ACEC/RNA (continued)</i>		(g) Stipulate the ACEC no-surface-occupancy for leasable mineral exploration and development, including seismic exploration. Close the ACEC to mineral material sales and free use permits. (h) Limit motorized vehicle use to designated and signed roads and trails. (i) Develop a visitor information station/kiosk (and possibly a small picnic area) in the parking area overlooking the canyon (at the end of the County Line Road) to provide public awareness of the nature and fragility of the area and constrain casual use to that immediate area (rather than allowing such use to occur along the entire rim). (j) Designate and manage the ACEC/RNA as VRM Class II.		

Issue/Concern	Alternative 1 No Action	Alternative 2	Alternative 3 (BLM Preferred)	Alternative 4
<p><i>Coyote Hills ACEC</i></p> <p>Relevance: More than 100 sites containing pictographs, petroglyphs, and possibly tools and artifacts.</p> <p>Importance: The identified cultural values are fragile, irreplaceable resources that have already been damaged by illegal excavation. Sites occur in unusual concentration, indicating special significance to aboriginal populations.</p>	<p>The nominated Coyote Hills ACEC would not be proposed for designation. General management of the Coyote Hills area would continue as described in the Bennett Hills/Timmerman Hills MFP (the MFP does not contain any specific decisions related to the Coyote Hills area) (see Bennett Hills ACEC “Alternative 1” description on page 47 above).</p>	<p>Designate approximately 49,062 acres as the Coyote Hills ACEC (see Map 9). Implement the following actions to protect the cultural resources and associated setting from destruction and loss and allow for professional research: (a) Develop a Cultural Resource Management Plan which emphasizes National Register District nomination; curation of collections; limitations on any activity that may adversely impact cultural resources; fire suppression guidelines; annual reporting procedures; physical protection measures; regulatory and/or interpretive signs; law enforcement; erosion control; and site stabilization. (b) Limit mineral material sales and free use permits to existing sites and public lands adjacent to the Bliss-Hill City Road and State Highway 46. (c) Limit motorized vehicle use to designated and signed roads and trails. (d) Permitting for professional research will follow the process outlined in BLM Manual 1851 for Cultural Resource Use Permits.</p>	Same as Alternative 1.	

Issue/Concern	Alternative 1 No Action	Alternative 2	Alternative 3 (BLM Preferred)	Alternative 4
<p><i>Dry Creek ACEC/RNA</i></p> <p><u>Relevance:</u> Scenic, near-pristine riparian system in a desert environment.</p> <p><u>Importance:</u> Visual and resource values are seldom seen in southern Idaho. Valuable as a rare, low elevation riparian reference area.</p>	<p>The nominated Dry Creek ACEC would not be proposed for designation. General management of the Dry Creek area would continue as described in Bennett Hills/Timmerman Hills MFP (see Bennett Hills ACEC “Alternative 1” description on page 47 above). (Note: The MFP does not have specific management for the Dry Creek area.)</p> <p>In addition, the nominated area (which lies within the Gooding City of Rocks East WSA and is “eligible” for further Wild and Scenic River study) would continue to be managed to prevent non-impairment of wilderness values and to maintain those values which qualified the creek as eligible for further study as a Wild and Scenic River.</p>	<p>Designate approximately 869 acres, including 3.8 miles of stream reaches, as the Dry Creek ACEC/RNA (see Map 9). Implement the following actions to highlight management of the ACEC’s scenic and riparian values: (a) Close the area to livestock grazing. (b) Prevent noxious weed invasion by treating public lands adjacent to the ACEC and promptly treating existing and new weed infestations within the ACEC. (c) Close the ACEC to mineral material sales and free use permits. (d) Designate the ACEC/RNA as “closed” to motorized vehicle use. (e) Do not allow new land use authorizations (e.g., rights of way, R&PP Act leases, land use permits). (f) Designate and manage the ACEC/RNA as VRM Class I. (g) Only allow those vegetation manipulation actions or surface disturbing activities that will protect or enhance the near-pristine low elevation riparian plant community and/or the adjacent late seral upland plant communities.</p>	<p>Same as Alternative 1.</p>	

Issue/Concern	Alternative 1 No Action	Alternative 2	Alternative 3 (BLM Preferred)	Alternative 4
<p><i>King Hill Creek ACEC/RNA</i></p> <p>Relevance: Extremely deep, vertical-walled canyon with scenic vegetation and geology. Genetically pure Interior redband trout, a BLM sensitive species. Near-pristine low elevation riparian area.</p> <p>Importance: Isolated, with spectacular scenery. Important source of Interior redband trout for re-introduction elsewhere. Important as a riparian reference area.</p>	<p>The nominated King Hill Creek ACEC would not be proposed for designation. General management of the King Hill Creek area would continue as described in the Bennett Hills/Timmerman Hills MFP (no specific management decisions for the King Hill Creek area are contained in the MFP) (see Bennett Hills ACEC “Alternative 1” description on page 47 above).</p> <p>In addition, portions of the nominated area which lie within the King Hill Creek WSA would continue to be managed to prevent non-impairment of wilderness values. Portions of the nominated area which have been found “eligible” for future Wild and Scenic River study would be managed to maintain those values which qualified the creek as eligible.</p>		<p>Designate 10 miles (approximately 2,880 acres) of King Hill Creek as an ACEC/RNA, including approximately 1,220 acres managed by the Four Rivers Field Office - BLM (see Map 12). Implement the following actions to highlight management of the scenic, fisheries, and riparian values within the ACEC: (a) Close the area to livestock grazing. (b) Close all aquatic habitat in the King Hill Creek ACEC/RNA to introduction of genetic strains of trout which are not native to the King Hill Creek watershed. Petition the Idaho Department of Fish and Game to prohibit the introduction of genetic strains of trout into King Hill Creek which are not native to the King Hill Creek watershed. (c) Prevent noxious weed invasion by treating public lands adjacent to the ACEC and promptly treating existing and new weed infestations within the ACEC. (d) Exclude the ACEC from new land use authorizations (e.g., rights-of-way, R&PP Act leases, land use permits). (e) Close the ACEC to mineral material sales and free use permits. (f) Designate the ACEC/RNA as “closed” to motorized vehicle use. (g) Designate the ACEC as VRM Class I. (h) Authorize only those actions which maintain or improve desirable habitat conditions for redband trout.</p>	

Issue/Concern	Alternative 1 No Action	Alternative 2	Alternative 3 (BLM Preferred)	Alternative 4
<p>McKinney Butte ACEC/RNA</p> <p>Relevance: Outstanding cave scenery and examples of volcanism and lava tube formation. Significant hibernating populations of two bat species, both BLM sensitive species. Diverse cave-adapted insect community. Known paleontological resources, including remains of extinct or extirpated species.</p> <p>Importance: Unique variety, abundance, and undisturbed character of cave features. Hibernation habitat for significant numbers of a BLM sensitive species (Townsend's big-eared bat). Unusual plant and invertebrate communities. High potential of additional fossil resources.</p>	<p>The nominated McKinney Butte ACEC would not be proposed for designation. General management of the McKinney Butte area would continue as described in the Bennett Hills/Timmerman Hills MFP (the MFP contains some general statements encouraging protection of known cave resources). (Also see Bennett Hills ACEC "Alternative 1" description on page .) Caves in the McKinney Butte area would continue to be managed according to the current Upper Snake River District Cave Management Plan (USDI-BLM, 1999). Caves which the BLM has determined are significant would continue to be protected under the Federal Cave Resources Protection Act.</p>		<p>Designate 3,764 acres as the McKinney Butte ACEC/RNA to protect significant subsurface resources and focus use of the area on research and education. Implement the following actions to highlight management of the identified scenic, wildlife, and cave values: (a) Prepare an activity plan for the McKinney Butte ACEC/RNA. The plan will incorporate limitations on any activity that may adversely impact physical, biological, or cultural resources; fire suppression guidelines; annual reporting procedures; physical protection measures; regulatory and/or interpretive signs; law enforcement; and Limits of Acceptable Change concepts to protect cave resource values. The Limits of Acceptable Change will be cave-specific and developed in consultation with affected user groups. (b) Continue to follow the provisions and guidance stated in the Upper Snake River District Cave Management Plan (USDI-BLM, 1999). [Note: The Cave Management Plan directs monitoring of cave resources and impacts. It includes direction to conduct comprehensive inventories of each cave's physical and structural makeup and biological life. Where needed to protect cave resources, special management actions would be implemented such as surface vehicular closures, marking travel routes through caves, installing bat gates, and requiring permits for visitor use. Law enforcement and public education strategies and actions are also discussed.] (c) Restrict access to the cave(s) containing bats during winter hibernation periods (October 15 through May 1), except for approved research or BLM management actions. Prohibit access to caves which provide maternity roosts from June 1 through August 31. (d) Close the ACEC to mineral material sales and free use permits. (e) Limit vehicle use to designated and signed roads and trails. (f) Do not allow new land use authorizations (e.g., rights of way, R&PP leases, land use permits). (g) Designate a total of 13 caves as significant.</p>	

Issue/Concern	Alternative 1 No Action	Alternative 2	Alternative 3 (BLM Preferred)	Alternative 4
<p>Tee-Maze ACEC/RNA</p> <p>Relevance: Outstanding cave scenery and examples of volcanism and lava tube formation. Significant hibernating populations of two bat species, both BLM sensitive species. Diverse cave-adapted insect community. Known paleontological resources, including remains of extinct or extirpated species.</p> <p>Importance: Unique variety, abundance, and undisturbed character of cave features. Hibernation habitat for significant numbers of a BLM sensitive species (Townsend's big-eared bat). Unusual plant and invertebrate communities. High potential of additional fossil resources.</p>	<p>The nominated Tee-Maze ACEC would not be proposed for designation. General management of the Tee-Maze area would continue as described in the Bennett Hills/Timmerman Hills MFP (the MFP contains some general statements encouraging protection of known cave resources). (Also see Bennett Hills ACEC "Alternative 1" description on page 47.) Caves in the Tee-Maze area would continue to be managed according to the current Upper Snake River District Cave Management Plan (USDI-BLM, 1999). Caves which the BLM has determined are significant would continue to be protected under the Cave Resources Protection Act.</p>		<p>Designate 10,762 acres as the Tee-Maze ACEC/RNA to protect significant subsurface resources and focus use of the area on research and education. Implement the following actions to highlight management of the identified scenic, wildlife, and cave values: (a) Prepare an activity plan for the Tee-Maze ACEC/RNA. The plan will incorporate limitations on any activity that may adversely impact physical, biological, or cultural resources; fire suppression guidelines; annual reporting procedures; physical protection measures; regulatory and/or interpretive signs; law enforcement; and Limits of Acceptable Change concepts to protect cave resource values. The Limits of Acceptable Change will be cave-specific and developed in consultation with affected user groups. (b) Continue to follow the provisions and guidance stated in the Upper Snake River District Cave Management Plan (USDI-BLM, 1999). [Note: The Cave Management Plan directs monitoring of cave resources and impacts. It includes direction to conduct comprehensive inventories of each cave's physical and structural makeup and biological life. Where needed to protect cave resources, special management actions would be implemented such as surface vehicular closures, marking travel routes through caves, installing bat gates, and requiring permits for visitor use. Law enforcement and public education strategies and actions are also discussed.] (c) Restrict access to the cave(s) containing bats during winter hibernation periods (October 15 through May 1), except for approved research or BLM management actions. Prohibit access to caves which provide maternity roosts from June 1 through August 31. (d) Limit mineral material sales and free use permits to existing sites and public lands adjacent to State Highway 75. (e) Limit vehicle use to designated and signed roads and trails, except for (1) allowing the existing stackable blocky lava rock permit holder to continue to have cross-country access to his permitted area for the duration of his permit, and (2) allowing cross-country access within the Mammoth Cave Common Use Area. (f) Do not allow new land use authorizations (e.g., rights of way, R&PP leases, land use permits). (g) Designate a total of 12 caves as significant.</p>	

Amendments Monitoring and Evaluation

The monitoring plan described below would apply to all three action alternatives (Alternatives 2, 3, and 4). The following steps would be taken to monitor implementation of the approved amendments (the selected alternative) through an annual and five-year review process.

Annually, the BLM will complete these actions:

- Identify the amendments' management direction accomplished and the management decisions that are planned for implementation during the coming year. Notify public land users of these accomplishments and plans by posting the results of the monitoring on the Shoshone Field Office's homepage.

Land Tenure

- Document lands program actions that were implemented during the past year.
- Update the information in Appendix 6 (lands currently available for disposal under the Federal Land Transaction Facilitation Act) and the land status and lands management zones maps to reflect any land tenure adjustments that have taken place during the preceding year.
- Identify land tenure actions that are planned for implementation.

ACECS (including the five existing ACECs)

- Document all actions occurring within or pertaining to the existing and newly designated ACECs during the past year.
 - Identify management direction that is expected to be implemented during the coming year.
- Evaluate the amendments' implementation by addressing at least the following questions about the direction that was implemented:

Was the specified activity carried out as described and authorized? If not, why wasn't it?
Was the specified activity successful in achieving its objective?

Every five years, the annual monitoring information will be evaluated along with the amendments and all interim reports. Questions to be answered will include, but are not limited to, the following:

Are actions outlined in the amendments being implemented?
Are the desired outcomes being achieved?
Do decisions continue to be correct and proper over time?
Are there new data or analyses that affect the planning decisions or NEPA analysis?
Are there new legal mandates not addressed in the land use plans or amendments?
Are any modifications (maintenance, amendment, or revision) needed to the plans?

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